

Public Notice – Environmental Project

PURPOSE OF NOTICE:

The Department of Environmental Quality seeks public comment on the state's response to the environmental aspects of a proposed activity in Chincoteague, Virginia.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

May 9, 2013 to June 6, 2013

TYPE OF RESPONSE:

Federal Consistency Determination

DEQ is reviewing the proposed establishment of a safety zone in support of an annual Pony Swim in the Assateague Channel between Chincoteague Island and Assateague Island on July 24 and 26, 2013 to determine whether the event would be consistent with the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program (VCP) established pursuant to the federal Coastal Zone Management Act. The VCP seeks to protect the quality of air, water, and other natural resources in Virginia's coastal area.

NAME OF AGENCY PROPOSING THE PROJECT:

U.S. Department of Homeland Security: U.S. Coast Guard

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The Coast Guard intends to issue a CG-4424 Permit for Marine Event to the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company, the event sponsors, for the Chincoteague Fire Company Wild Pony Swim. The event will take place in the waters of the Assateague Channel between the eastern side of Chincoteague Island and the western side of Assateague Island, on Wednesday, July 24, 2013 from 5:00 AM to 1:00 PM and on Friday, July 26 from 7:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Approximately 100 Assateague ponies are expected to make the swim on each day, and approximately 50,000 spectators are expected along the shorelines. Vessel traffic will be temporarily restricted on the two days to provide for the safety of participants, spectators, and transiting vessels. The Coast Guard will place 11 yellow unlighted buoys around the outer limits of the swim zone, and 5 white and orange "No Wake" zone buoys to assist in controlling spectator watercraft speed.

The Coast Guard has an established Special Local Regulation, #2 in the table to 33 CFR Part 100, section 100.501(c), to promote safety on the navigable waters immediately before, during, and immediately after a marine event.

The Coast Guard states that the proposed event is consistent, to the maximum extent practicable, with the enforceable policies of the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program.

HOW TO COMMENT:

DEQ accepts comments from the public by e-mail, fax, or postal mail. All comments must include the name, address, and telephone number of the person commenting and be received by DEQ within the comment period. The public may review the project document at DEQ's central office in Richmond.

CONTACT FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS, DOCUMENT REQUESTS, AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

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